

# Residential Burglary and Repeat Burglary Victimisation in Tasmania

By

Vanessa Goodwin, BA/LLB (Tas.), M. Phil (Crim) (Camb.)

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## STATEMENT

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

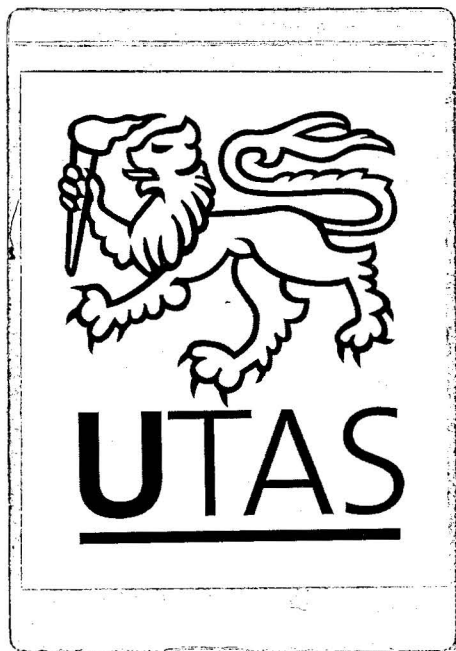
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents the findings from one of the most comprehensive research studies on residential burglary undertaken to date in Australia. One of the key strengths of the study is the use of different methods to examine various aspects of the burglary problem in Tasmania. The study involved interviews with 60 imprisoned burglars, 50 repeat burglary victims, ten insurance industry representatives and ten police officers. In addition, police data relating to the residential burglaries committed in Southern Tasmania over the three-year period from 2000-2002 were analysed, with a particular focus on six suburbs, three of which were public housing areas.

The study makes an important empirical contribution to the existing research on burglary. The empirical findings relate to various aspects of the residential burglary problem in Tasmania, such as the different profile of burglary in public housing areas compared to other suburbs, the nature and extent of repeat victimisation, the reasons why people make false reports to police, the nature and extent of insurance fraud and the main methods of disposal of stolen goods. The study also tests some of the theoretical assumptions about burglary, such as the importance of the drug-crime relationship, and the relevance of flag and boost accounts of repeat victimisation, and explores the extent to which burglars are rational decision-makers.

The study provides a range of new insights into the burglary problem and confirms some of the findings from research conducted elsewhere. The analysis of the six suburbs reveals that both the burglary rate and the proportion of repeat burglaries are much higher in the three public housing areas. The high burglary rate in these areas is partly attributable to the large number of burglaries of vacant public housing dwellings, usually involving the theft of household items such as wood heaters, stoves and hot-water cylinders. Various research and policy implications emerge from the study, such as: the need to address police data quality issues; the need for greater clarification in defining what is meant by repeat burglary victimisation; the need to review public housing allocation policies and implement strategies to facilitate the development of social capital; the need to provide rehabilitative programs for offenders; the need for greater cooperation between the police and the insurance industry to enhance fraud prevention; and the potential benefit of focusing more attention on collecting forensic evidence at the burglary scene.

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